

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.

OMFTS: THE RIGHT FIT FOR USPACOM VERSUS AN EMERGING CHINA

OR  
"THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHS"

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of [Joint Military Operations].

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal view and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature. 

18 May 1998

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DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 1

## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
2. Security Classification Authority:			
3. Declassification/Downgrading Schedule:			
4. Distribution/Availability of Report: DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED.			
5. Name of Performing Organization: JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			
6. Office Symbol: C		7. Address: NAVAL WAR COLLEGE 686 CUSHING ROAD. NEWPORT, RI 02841-1207	
8. Title (Include Security Classification): OMFTS: The Right Fit for USPACOM Versus an Emerging China or "The Emperor's New Cloths" (u)			
9. Personal Authors: Lieutenant Colonel Roy R. Byrd, USMC			
10. Type of Report: FINAL		11. Date of Report: 18 May 1998	
12. Page Count: 28			
13. Supplementary Notation: A paper submitted to the Faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.			
14. Ten key words that relate to your paper: U.S. and Chinese security, USPACOM, OMFTS, Operational Factors, Forward Presence.			
15. Abstract: OMFTS emerges as an operational concept, tailored to support USPACOM as America and China move along converging paths. Their respective strategies and divergent political philosophies, particularly in their approaches to regional and international relations, could produce future tensions, crisis or conflict. As China embarks upon a bold program of military and economic development, the United States could face a decline in its geostrategic position. China and the Asia Pacific region are within USPACOM's expansive area of responsibility. USPACOM's strategic focus is peace engagement and deterrence. Effective deterrence is predicated upon credible resolve, and the means with which to demonstrate it. Operational factors, space, time, and forces, are acute in the USPACOM AOR. The loss of forward bases could provide China with an opportunity to aggressively pursue disputed territorial claims. OMFTS promises to mitigate or restore the geostrategic balance, enhance deterrence, or should it fail provide a decisive winning strike.			
16. Distribution / Availability of Abstract:	Unclassified  X	Same As Rpt	DTIC Users
17. Abstract Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
18. Name of Responsible Individual: CHAIRMAN, JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			
19. Telephone: 841-6461		20. Office Symbol: C	

## **ABSTRACT**

OMFTS emerges as an operational concept, tailored to support USPACOM as America and China move along converging paths. Their respective strategies and divergent political philosophies, particularly in their approaches to regional and international relations, could produce future tensions, crisis or conflict. As China embarks upon a bold program of military and economic development, the United States could face a decline in its geostrategic position. China and the Asia Pacific region are within USPACOM's expansive area of responsibility. USPACOM's strategic focus is peace engagement and deterrence. Effective deterrence is predicated upon credible resolve, and the means with which to demonstrate it. Operational factors, space, time, and forces, are acute in the USPACOM AOR. The loss to forward basing access could provide an assertive China with an opportunity to aggressively pursue disputed territorial claims. These actions would come in conflict with America's vital interests. OMFTS can mitigate and or restore the operational and strategic balance independent of forward basing requirements; it addresses a potential forward presence gap. Should deterrence fail, OMFTS emerges as a decisive, war winning capability. It provides the CINC operational flexibility and freedom of action within USPACOM's AOR, with or without access to forward bases.

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**OMFTS: THE RIGHT FIT FOR USPACOM VERSUS AN EMERGING CHINA**  
**OR**  
***"THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHS"***

Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS) is an operational concept that takes its direction from the revised Navy and Marine Corps strategic declarations published in "...From the Sea" and "Forward ...From the Sea."<sup>1</sup> On balance it is a credible concept for expanding the philosophy of maneuver warfare seamlessly across the spectrum of conflict, advancing the relevance to naval power projection into the new millennium. OMFTS is consistent with the role and mission of the Marine Corps and its core competencies. It is compatible with the operational pillars specified in Joint Vision (JV) 2010--dominant maneuver, precision engagement, focused logistics, and force protection.<sup>2</sup> However, there remains one critical litmus test, utility. Unless the operational vision of OMFTS is shared by at least one of the combatant commanders of the unified commands--the warfighting CINCs--it will remain merely a service driven concept, that in application will likely be relegated to the tactical rather than operational level of warfare. The emergence of a modern and potentially hostile Chinese military within the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) area of responsibility (AOR) provides a tailored setting from which to evaluate the relevance and feasibility of OMFTS at the operational level.

Focusing on the USPACOM AOR, this analysis will begin by framing the strategic foundations, political and military, from the American and Chinese perspective. A comparison of strategic interests will follow, to identify potential areas of conflict and establish the policy strategy environment in which USPACOM must operate. It will also begin to frame the operational challenges. For example, is OMFTS a flexible and adaptive concept; can it counter a modern Chinese military threat? The analysis will then shift to the unified combatant commander, Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Command (CINCUSPACOM), for an exploration of the mission, organization and area of responsibility. A more thorough discussion of the OMFTS concept and its

supporting derivatives--Ship-to-Objective Maneuver (STOM) and Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) 2010--will follow. The strategic, operational, and conceptual aspects are then tied together in a comparative analysis. The analysis then shifts from theory to practicality, how well OMFTS fits into USPACOM's operational arsenal; is it a good fit or more analogous to the "The Emperor's New Cloths," intriguing but lacking substance. Three questions are posed: (1) does OMFTS facilitate joint and combined force integration; (2) will it require an organizational change within USPACOM; and (3) can it counter a modernized Chinese military? The discussion balances supporting points against counter arguments before arriving at a conclusion.

### **U.S. National Security Strategy**

The United States, whether by choice or default, is the preeminent world leader. Given its strategic location, geography, population and economic potential, the emergence of a disciplined, if not totally benevolent, China, is one of the most imposing foreign policy challenges facing the United States. The current national security strategy, "A National Security Strategy for a New Century," has an overarching strategy of "leadership and engagement." America's strategic core objectives are: enhancing security through effective diplomacy and with military forces ready to fight and win; bolstering America's economic prosperity; and the promotion of democracy abroad.<sup>3</sup>

In support of the national strategy, the United States has embraced a policy of "comprehensive engagement" towards the People's Republic of China (PRC). The belief, continued dialogue and contact across the spectrum of interests will eventually lead to political changes conducive to stability, openness, security and peace.<sup>4</sup>

### **Chinese Security Strategy**

While the United States is a global power, the People's Republic of China remains essentially a regional power. China's approach to international relations is driven by nationalism and narrowly defined concepts of state sovereignty--realpolitik.<sup>5</sup> The PRC believes the current period of

relaxation within East Asia is merely a breathing spell, during which countries throughout the region will address issues neglected during the Cold War; the resumption of a Great Power rivalry in Asia is inevitable.<sup>6</sup>

The defining objective of Beijing's national strategy is for China to become a "Great Power."<sup>7</sup> Officially, Beijing opposes any form of hegemonism, power politics, acts of aggression or expansion in the region.<sup>8</sup> However, official policy is not necessarily consistent with Chinese actions within the region. China has pursued an assertive policy of sovereignty claims that more or less enclose the entire South China Sea. Whether Beijing is claiming the entire area as "historical waters" or sovereignty--consolidation of ocean land masses--is unclear.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps, the promise of access to untapped oil and mineral reserves is the driving force behind China's aggressive behavior in the region. Recently disclosed Chinese documents indicate that disputed island groups could provide "lebensraum" for the Chinese people.<sup>10</sup> Whatever the rationale, China's claims are increasingly supported by political rhetoric. In a 1996 address to the U.S. National Defense University, PRC Defense Minister, General Chi Haotian stated that safeguarding sovereignty over territorial land, air, waters, maritime rights and interest is a key tenet of China's defense policy.<sup>11</sup>

### **Strategic Comparison**

*"To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."*  
Sun Tzu<sup>12</sup>

The People's Republic of China, a regional power on the rise, could very well become America's leading peer competitor in the coming century. Regional stability, economic growth, peace and prosperity hang in the balance, the outcome could transform East Asia, the Pacific, and the world. America's strategic objective is to shape China into a nation that will promote, rather than undermine the interest of its neighbors, to enhance peace and stability within the region. China's strategic objective is to become the dominate power in the region. This can only be achieved through the neutralization of American power and influence in the region--zero sum game, realpolitik.

The United States has immediate, direct and vital interests in keeping the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) in the Indonesian Archipelago and the South China Sea open (Straits of Malacca, Sunda, Lombok, and sea lanes passing the Spratly Islands).<sup>\*</sup> With half the world's shipping passing through the SLOCs, closure of any would, at a minimum, increase shipping rates; a serious blockade could precipitate severe economic pressures throughout world markets.<sup>13</sup> Equally important, for similar reasons, is the PRC's acceptance of a free and democratic--not independent--Taiwan.

China's intimidation of Taiwan in 1996 was impeded when America sent two carrier battle groups into the region. China had to back down, lose face or risk the loss of its burgeoning naval force. PRC hard-liners noted how easily the United States humiliated China's military. As a result, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and PRC strategists have embarked upon a program aimed at countering America's advantage, especially in information based warfare. The PRC's goal, is to gain parity in the near term, superiority in the future. Beijing's focus is to minimize the PLA's technological vulnerabilities. A recent article in the PRC military journal, "Modern Weaponry" presented seven strategies for low-tech countries to overcome American advantages.<sup>14</sup> The PLA is also developing new doctrine and weapons systems to facilitate high technology warfare. In addition to 5000 Marines, the PRC has designated 20 army division as rapid deployment forces. Key mission areas for modernization include: strategic airlift, aerial refueling, ground attack and air superiority fighters; improved ground force mobility, logistics, air defense, command and control capabilities, anti-submarine warfare, ship-borne air defense, sustained naval operations, and amphibious warfare capabilities.<sup>15</sup> However, defense planning projections indicate a regional oriented Chinese naval force, capable of challenging the U.S. Seventh Fleet is not likely prior to 2020.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> See Maps, Figures (1)-(4)



### **United States Pacific Command.**

Located in Hawaii USPACOM's mission, promote peace, deter aggression respond to crisis and if necessary, fight and win to advance security and stability throughout the Asia Pacific region. U. S. Pacific Command is a unified command with approximately 304,000 military personnel from all service branches. A third of the force is either forward deployed or forward based, with the remainder based in the Continental United States (CONUS). The active components include: the Eighth Army and 25th Infantry Division; the Third and Seventh Fleet; I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) and III MEF; and the Fifth, Seventh, Eleventh and Thirteenth Air Force. USPACOM is organized into four subunified commands--U.S. Forces Japan, U.S. Forces Korea, Special Operations Command Pacific, Alaska Command--with four standing Joint Task Forces (JTFs).<sup>17</sup>

USPACOM has an expansive area of responsibility. It extends from the west coast of the United States to the east coast of Africa, and from the Arctic to the Antarctic. The AOR encompasses 44 countries, and 30 territories and possessions with over 60% of the world's population and seven of its largest armed forces. It covers roughly half of the earth's surface including vast expanses of ocean.<sup>18</sup>

The national military strategy advances the national security strategy of "leadership and engagement" and the China policy of "comprehensive engagement." It calls for U.S. Armed Forces to help shape the international environment; to promote stability, prevent or reduce conflicts and threats, and to deter aggression.<sup>19</sup> These criteria steer the actions of the regional commander in chief (CINC). China, as part of the Asian Pacific, falls within the purview of CINCUSPACOM.

USPACOM's mission is to promote peace, deter aggression, respond to crisis, and if necessary, fight and win to advance security and stability throughout the Asia Pacific region. The strategy hinges on a credible forward presence, bilateral relationships, multilateral exercises and dialogue.<sup>20</sup>

### Operational Maneuver From The Sea

The role of the Navy and Marine Corps in a regional conflict is to maintain a forward presence, to be a transition force when a crisis erupts, settle the crisis or establish a lodgment for the successful entry of follow-on forces--Army, Air Force--to settle it.<sup>21</sup> OMFTS complements the Navy's operational concept of expeditionary power projection (XP2). The XP2 concept focuses on leveraging naval power at the operational level. Underpinning this concept is the supposition that forward deployed naval forces deter through their enabling capability.<sup>22</sup> OMFTS addresses the issue of credible power projection independent of forward staging bases, friendly borders, overflight rights or other politically dependent support. It provides a sustainable sea-based forcible entry capability.<sup>23</sup> When optimally employed it can deliver a decisive strike against an enemy's center of gravity or critical vulnerability.<sup>24</sup> It merges the two parts of a littoral operation, the seaward and inland areas. OMFTS uses the sea as maneuver space, enabling the operational commander to maintain overwhelming tempo and momentum.<sup>25</sup>

Traditional amphibious operations require an operational pause to facilitate the build up of forces and material before completing the transition from the seaward to inland areas of operations. OMFTS views the sea and land as separate but not distinct maneuver surfaces. There are six guiding principles for the conduct of OMFTS operations: (1) they must focus on an operational objective--centers of gravity or critical enemy vulnerabilities; (2) use the sea as maneuver space; (3) generate overwhelming tempo and momentum; (4) leverage strength against weakness; (5) emphasize intelligence, deception and flexibility; and (6) integrate all organic, joint and combined assets.<sup>26</sup> These principles are compatible with the operational pillars presented in Joint Vision (JV) 2010; guidance from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) for the common evolution of U.S. Armed Forces.<sup>27</sup> The pillars: dominant maneuver, precision engagement, focused logistics and force protection; are imbedded in the concept.<sup>28</sup>

Ship-To-Objective Maneuver (STOM) is the tactical link to OMFTS. It is how the ground combat commander extends the maneuver space across the littoral to strike at an inland operational objective without loss of tempo or momentum. STOM capitalizes upon the expanded battlespace the sea offers to frustrate the enemy's defensive efforts, mitigating the advantage, of position, usually conferred upon the defender. Assaulting from sea positions over the horizon expands the defender's dilemma, compounds his targeting problem, and minimizes his reaction time. STOM takes advantage of emerging technologies in mobility, command, and control to maneuver combined arms forces across sea and land surfaces--providing the tactical commander with dominate maneuver. STOM focuses on the operational objective, it eliminates the phasing of forces ashore, striking deep, directly against enemy critical vulnerabilities.<sup>29</sup>

Sea-basing is a major tenet of OMFTS. The preponderance of fire support, in the form of attack aviation, and long range surface fires remain sea-based. Assault forces employ sensor-to-shooter-systems to target and engage threats in the attack area.<sup>30</sup> OMFTS also advocates offshore basing, initial logistics support is embarked upon ships of the amphibious task force (ATF) or support ships of the naval expeditionary task force (NETF). Maneuver units draw support on an as needed basis, a "logistics pull" concept. This concept requires total asset visibility, tailored offload, and rapid delivery.<sup>31</sup> During operations of greater duration Maritime Prepositioning Forces (MPF) will augment and enhance the sea-based logistics functions. The Marine Corps concept "MPF 2010 and Beyond" is aimed at expanding MPF capabilities to enhance OMFTS operations.

MPF 2010 will contribute to forward presence and power projection. It will facilitate the at-sea arrival and assembly of the maritime prepositioning force.\* MPF 2010 will also facilitate ATF integration, reinforcing the assault echelon. These MPF ships will serve as multi-purpose platforms, providing enhanced logistics services, such as equipment maintenance and repair; accommodate

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\* Currently, the force requires access to secure ports and airfields.

command and control modules, and other packaged capability functions. Finally, MPF 2010 will provide indefinite sustainment capability, able to serve as a sea-based conduit for logistics flow from CONUS.<sup>32</sup>

Through the application of STOM, utilizing over the horizon entry techniques, sea-based fires and logistics, OMFTS will facilitate the introduction of lighter, more lethal forces. Striking deep, from dispersed positions along the seaward flanks, with little or no requirement for a shore based support footprint, OMFTS decreases the magnitude of the force protection problem.

### **OMFTS & USPACOM**

The Institute for National Strategic Studies, estimates tensions between the United States and China will intensify by 2006; however, doubts they will erupted into conflict prior to 2016.<sup>33</sup> The most probable flashpoint would be Taiwan or the Spratly Islands.\* Some PRC strategists share this view. They, like many of their American colleagues, believe North Korea will eventually collapse. This will bring into question the entire issue of America's military presence in Asia. The Chinese anticipate an American troop withdrawal from Korea occurring as early as 2004. The Chinese also anticipate an eventual reduction, if not a total withdrawal of U.S. Forces from Japan--response to domestic pressures, in Japan and America. This series of events will provide the PRC a strategic window of opportunity in which to regain and expand its sovereign rights within the South China Sea.<sup>34</sup>

Under these circumstances, USPACOM's strategic focus will shifts from promoting peace, to deterring aggression. How can OMFTS assist the CINC in setting the military conditions to produce the desired end? Central to CINCUSPACOM is his ability to achieve the proper balance between the operational factors, space, time and forces. The first operational factor to consider is space.

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\* See Maps, Figures (3) and (4)

Without access to forward bases, USPACOM is at a geostrategic disadvantage. China, by virtue of its geostrategic position, relative to the disputed territories within the South China Sea, enjoys a central position, able to rapidly concentrate forces and strike at shorter distances. OMFTS enables the CINC to selectively gain a similar advantage. USPACOM would initially operate from an exterior position, its forces operating from Hawaii and the west coast of the United States. A traditional response approach requires the movement of forces to a forward operating base, the build-up of forces and logistics and finally their employment, through some form of maneuver warfare. OMFTS bypasses the interim shore-based force build-up stage, driving seamlessly from movement to maneuver. Properly planned and executed, OMFTS allows the CINC to employ large forces from multiple directions, an advantage of exterior position. However, because OMFTS is not dependent upon forward basing it also leverages some of the advantages of a central position. OMFTS exploits the advantages of both in a manner previously unattainable. The OMFTS concept enhances strategic and operational surprise since there is no physical sign of demarcation to indicate a change in the geostrategic balance--exterior to central. OMFTS can facilitate a central position advantage at sea rather than on land; forces remain dispersed, massing as they strike against the operational objective.

A counter argument to OMFTS is to merely shift USPACOM's forward basing posture; relocate within the region. Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, New Guinea or Australia could provide alternative forward basing opportunities. However, the issue of regional access, overflight and transit rights would remain. Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia, not to mention Japan, all have regional territorial disputes with China, and in some cases with each other. Establishing new bases among old antagonists could alienate potential coalition partners, fuel instability, and promote, rather than deter aggression; the political ramifications could undermine the national strategic objective. OMFTS eliminates these concerns, expands response options and enhances the CINC's regional deterrence affect.

Forward basing and OMFTS are complementary rather than competing operational concepts. Forward basing is an integral component of forward presence. Forward presence enables USPACOM to reduce response time--operational factor, time. Given the vast distance between the United States and China, the speed with which USPACOM can respond to a crisis is in itself a key element of deterrence. Forward presence is one of the pillars supporting the CINC's defensive strategy. It is how the CINC achieves operational reach, positioning forces within reach of enemy operational centers of gravity.<sup>35</sup> OMFTS seeks to achieve operational reach through movement and maneuver. As previously discussed, China enjoys a regional advantage of geostrategic position. Forward basing, of forces, equipment and supplies, decreases response time. However, if you accept the premise that it is in China's interest to reduce American access to forward regional bases, does it not follow that they would employ all instruments of power, political, economic, and military to deter their regional neighbors from introducing the same. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume access to forward bases within the Asia Pacific region will be less favorable and more restrictive in the future. OMFTS can mitigate the loss or reduction of forward bases in the USPACOM AOR. Once again, because OMFTS eliminates traditional methods of marshaling forces and supplies forward, it reduces response time. OMFTS enables a force to move and maneuver seamlessly, penetrate, then strike an enemy center of gravity or critical vulnerability.

The final operational factor equally crucial to USPACOM is forces. It is how the CINC integrates and synchronizes all means at his disposal. Presently, CINCUSPACOM pursues activities that are designed to reassure the region of America's commitment to deter conflict. This includes military to military contact, exercises, high level visits, conferences, and port visits, peace engagement measures, if you will, building relationships that can prevent and deter aggression. Factor, forces, is essentially a combination of political and military conditions that shape the strategic environment.

For USPACOM it is establishing a credible deterrent. Exercising OMFTS at the operational level is yet another means by which the CINC can demonstrate synergistic effect, relative to factor, forces.

Integral to USPACOM's consideration of OMFTS at the operational planning level is its impact upon the balance of space, time, and forces--operational factors. OMFTS simultaneously leverages the advantages of central and exterior position in a manner previously unattainable. It complements USPACOM's forward presence posture, mitigating a loss or decline in forward basing because it reduces reliance on forward bases and decreases traditional operational level response times. As an element of force, it helps the CINC shape the strategic environment. Taken in combination--space, time, force--OMFTS will strengthen the strategic and operational footing of USPACOM.

In theory, OMFTS will provide USPACOM with a unique operational power projection capability. It enables CINCUSPACOM to gain the advantage of position over an adversary by simultaneously exploiting the sea as a trafficable surface for friendly forces and a barrier to opponents. It decreases the requirement for forward bases. OMFTS restores operational flexibility and strength within the USPACOM AOR; independent of forward staging, basing, friendly border or overflight considerations. Can the theory hold up in practice?

Testifying before Congress, CINCUSPACOM, stated that theater missile defense, and chemical and biological defense are the most important long-term warfighting requirements within the USPACOM.<sup>36</sup> These are vital force protection issues; however, they are not unique to USPACOM. Force projection, particularly related to operational reach, is apt to become the most important warfighting requirement in USPACOM. If, as China believes, America's regional forward presence posture will decrease; the gravity of operational factors, time and space, will resonate within the planning cells of the J-5. Given a less than best, to worse case scenario, USPACOM will face a serious operational dilemma, how to offset its geostrategic disadvantage. It is a scenario for which

OMFTS facilitates the attainment of superior position. It permits freedom of action for friendly forces--to move, maneuver and strike seamlessly and decisively.

Moving OMFTS from a visionary concept to an operational capability is still a few years away. Advanced ship to objective delivery, command, control, intelligence, precision logistic, and sensor-to-shooter-systems are still in various phases of development and acquisition. According to current projections, Marine Corps operating forces will possess a modest but credible OMFTS capability by the end of the next decade; the Marines will achieve full operational capability nearer to 2020.

Before rendering a full endorsement of OMFTS, it must: (1) facilitate the integration of joint and regional combined force; (2) accommodate an existing USPACOM force structure; and (3) demonstrate resiliency in the face of a modern capable PLA.

Does OMFTS facilitate joint and combined force integration; conceptually, yes. OMFTS is not a stand alone, Marine Corps concept; it synthesizes the essential principles of expeditionary power projection--XP2. Moreover, the Marine Corps depends upon the Navy for amphibious lift and sea control. Therefore, conceptual weaknesses require contextual analysis--totality, Navy and Marine Corps context. Conversely, given current systems and modes of operation, it would appear serious gaps in joint and coalition interoperability exist.<sup>37</sup> It is reasonable to assume that in a regional conflict with the PRC; USPACOM's response would involve joint and coalition forces.

Interoperability gaps--command and control, maneuver, fires and logistics--disrupt tempo, diminish synergy, and increase risk; ultimately reducing the viability of OMFTS at the operational level.

The key to overcoming these deficits is to encourage the sharing of technology, through foreign military sales where possible, leasing or other opportunities. Expanding military to military contact, through professional military education and exchange programs can help familiarize allied and potential coalition forces with OMFTS doctrine and procedures. The CINC can enlarge the scope of current joint and combined training exercises. For example, USPACOM already conducts an annual



training exercise in Thailand--Cobra Gold. It includes joint-combined land and air operations, combined naval and amphibious operations, MPF operations, and special operations. The exercise, conducted over a period of approximately three weeks throughout Thailand, brings more than 25,000 Thai and U.S. Forces together.<sup>38</sup> Cobra Gold or similar exercises offer an ideal vehicle for transitioning to OMFTS based operations, and working through joint and combined interoperability issues.

Will OMFTS accommodate the USPACOM force structure; more than likely, it will. It is reasonable to assume, in a post Korea era, that the USPACOM force structure will decrease by at least 25%, leaving between 200,000-250,000 military personnel.\* These numbers exceed the amphibious lift capacity of a NETF, even when provide all the Navy's amphibious platforms. Current amphibious force requirements call for 12 amphibious ready groups(ARGs). This will provide sufficient lift for two-and-a-half Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs) by 2004.<sup>39</sup> \*\* However, utilization of other sea-based prepositioning assets--Ready Reserve Force (RRF) of 94 ships, augmented with eight large medium-speed roll-on/roll-off (LMSR) ships--can mitigate some of the shortfall. Future forces will likely be smaller; however, it is equally probable that they will possess greater lethality. OMFTS is unlikely to directly influence USPACOM's force structure; it is conceivable that it could generate adoption of a leaner, expeditionary force profile.

Finally, can OMFTS successfully counter a modernized Chinese military; given the right circumstances, and if properly executed, yes. If the Chinese continue on their current path of modernization they will pose a significant force protection challenge to an OMFTS operation. Carriers, amphibious ships, their escorts and support ships, including MPF and RRF assets, will

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\*With the collapse of Korea and the removal of forces from Japan, elements of the 8th Army, III MEF, the Fifth Air Force (Japan) and Seventh Air Force (Korea) would likely stand-down.

\*\* The MEF enabling force or MEF Forward is a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) normally consisting of a reinforced infantry regiment, a Marine Air Group (MAG), and a tailored Combat Service Support Group (CSSG)--sometimes referred to as a MEB equivalent.

present the PLA with very lucrative targets.<sup>40</sup> Hopefully, technological advances will enable the NETF to gain and maintain dominate knowledge of the battle space. The ability to see and engage an enemy first, is a core capability common to XP2 and OMFTS. It is also a tenet of JV 2010; the blueprint for how U.S. Forces plan to fight in the future. Nevertheless, risk avoidance could temper the CINCs willingness to conduct OMFTS at the operational level. However, properly planned and executed the operational advantages of OMFTS can offset the risk.

### Conclusions

USPACOM's strategic focus will remain deterrence. However, effective deterrence requires credible resolve, and the means with which to demonstrate it. Should deterrence fail, USPACOM has the mission to fight and win. Chinese aggression in the region, over territorial claims, will ensue, when the regional balance of power has shifted in their favor. This will occur when the PLA achieves regional parity and America relinquishes its geostrategic advantage--forward basing. Balancing the operational factors of space, time, and forces, is central to USPACOM's strategic focus. None of the factors are optimal; however, USPACOM has managed to overcome some of the operational factor deficits through forward presence--basing and deployments. OMFTS is not an anti-basing approach; it is a complementary concept. It is a concept that in the absence of forward bases, still enables the CINC to achieve operational reach, to maintain freedom of action, to mitigate USPACOM's operational factor deficits. Shared with allies and coalition partners, enlarged through joint and combined exercises, OMFTS is as much a deterrent as it is an executable operational concept.

Should deterrence fail, OMFTS becomes a decisive, war winning capability. From movement to maneuver, penetration to strike, OMFTS attacks the opponent's jugular. It is an economy of force approach, going right at centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities. Striking deep, from dispersed seaward positions with the combined advantages of exterior and central geostrategic positioning;

OMFTS facilitates surprise, and enhances force protection, above all, it satisfies the CINC's requirement to fight and win.

Although USPACOM would face a number of challenges in a regional conflict against a modern Chinese military, OMFTS offers the best employment options at both the tactical and operational level. It is a concept tailored to fit the response criteria of an expansive AOR. OMFTS is a forward looking, visionary concept that addresses a potential forward presence gap. The propensity for risk avoidance--the minimum casualty paradigm--might preclude OMFTS from achieving its full potential; imagine if "Blitzkrieg" or amphibious warfare had been relegated to the tactical level. OMFTS is a good fit for USPACOM, against an emerging China or any other regional threat.

#### **Recommendations**

OMFTS should be viewed as a complementary operational enhancement. It supports CINCUSPACOM's strategic objectives; USPACOM should endorse OMFTS, encourage and support its development and refinement. As it matures and as OMFTS capabilities come on line, CINCUSPACOM should seek to integrate OMFTS operations into his joint and combined exercise schedule. The CINC should include OMFTS, along with theater ballistic missile defense and chemical biological defense, as his most important long-term warfighting requirements--adding force projection to force protection.

#### **Summary**

OMFTS emerges as an operational concept, tailored to support USPACOM as America and China move along converging paths. Their respective strategies and divergent political philosophies, particularly in their approaches to regional and international relations, could produce future tensions, crisis or conflict. OMFTS mitigates the operational factors, space, time, forces. It provides CINCUSPACOM operational flexibility and freedom of action in the USPACOM AOR, with or without access to forward basing.

<sup>1</sup> Krulak, C. C., Operational Maneuver From The Sea: A Concept for the Projection of Naval Power Ashore 13 March 1998 <<http://ismo.www1.mcg.usmc.mil/concepts/omfts.htm>> (28 March 1998), 2.

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<sup>3</sup> William J. Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a New Century, (Washington, D.C. : White House, May 1997), i.

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# Southeast Asia

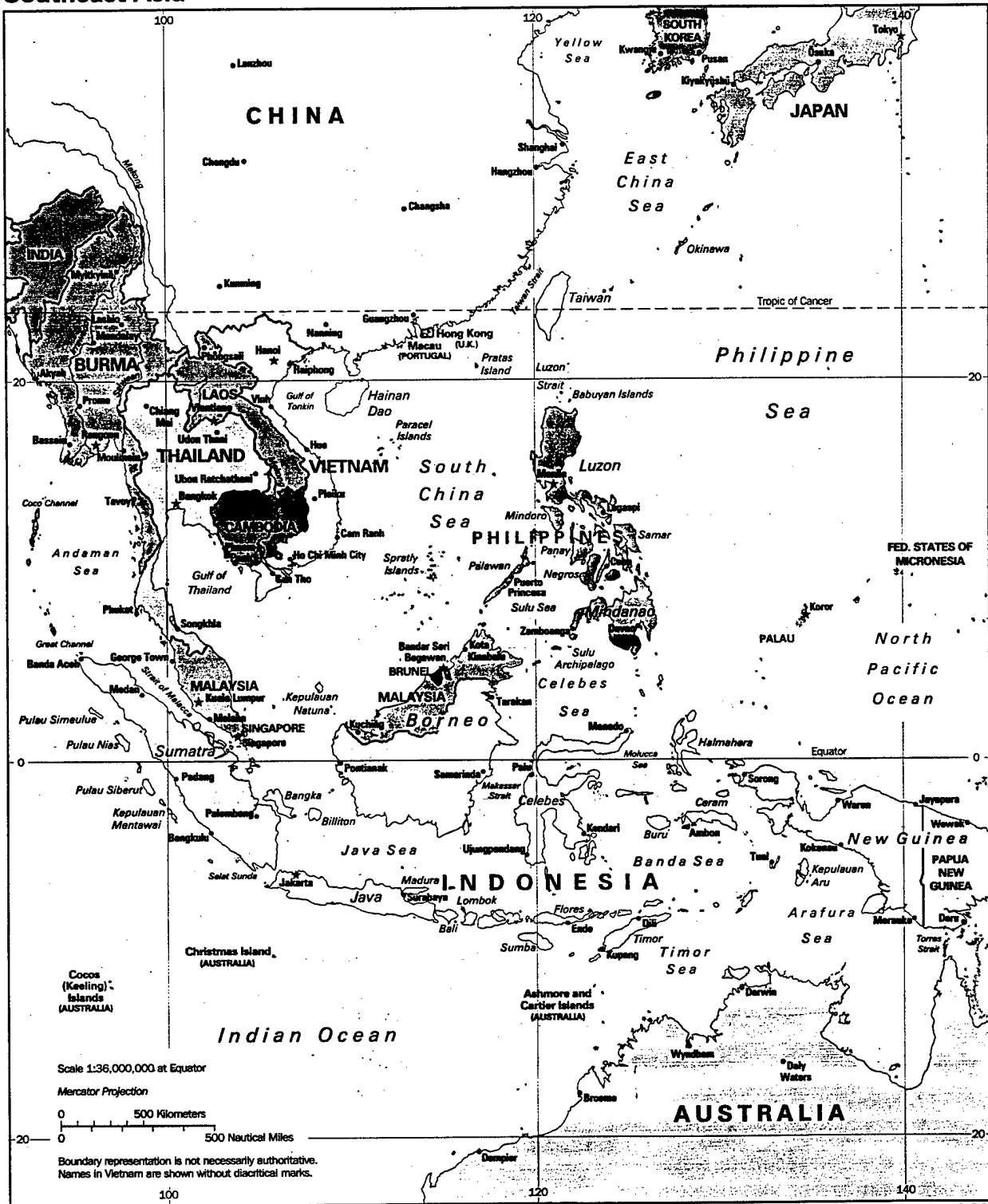


FIGURE (1)

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE LIBRARY



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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE LIBRARY

VERTICAL FILE 12/95

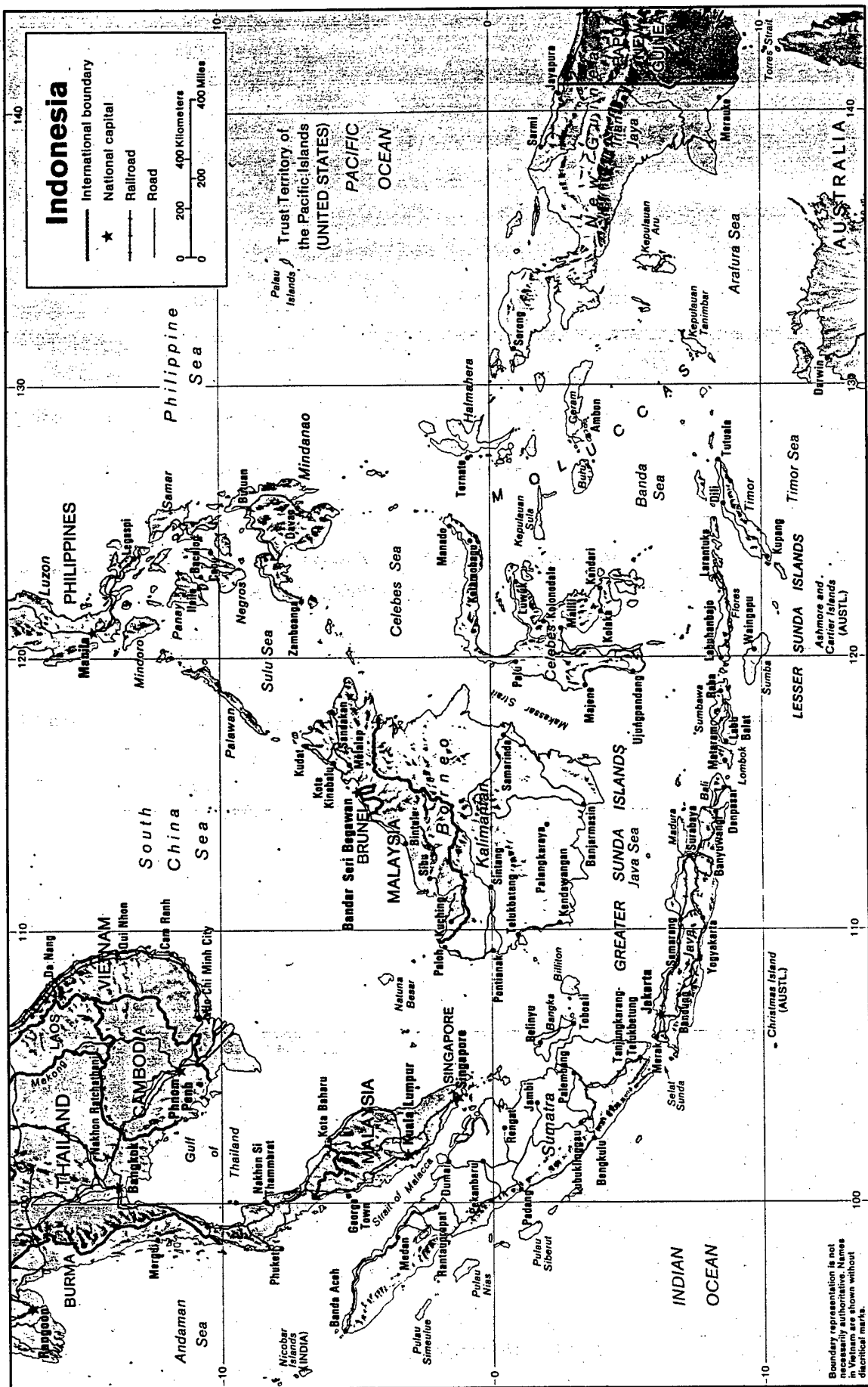


FIGURE (2)

ORIGINAL FOR COUNCIL  
11/13/87  
VERTICAL FILE



# South China Sea Islands

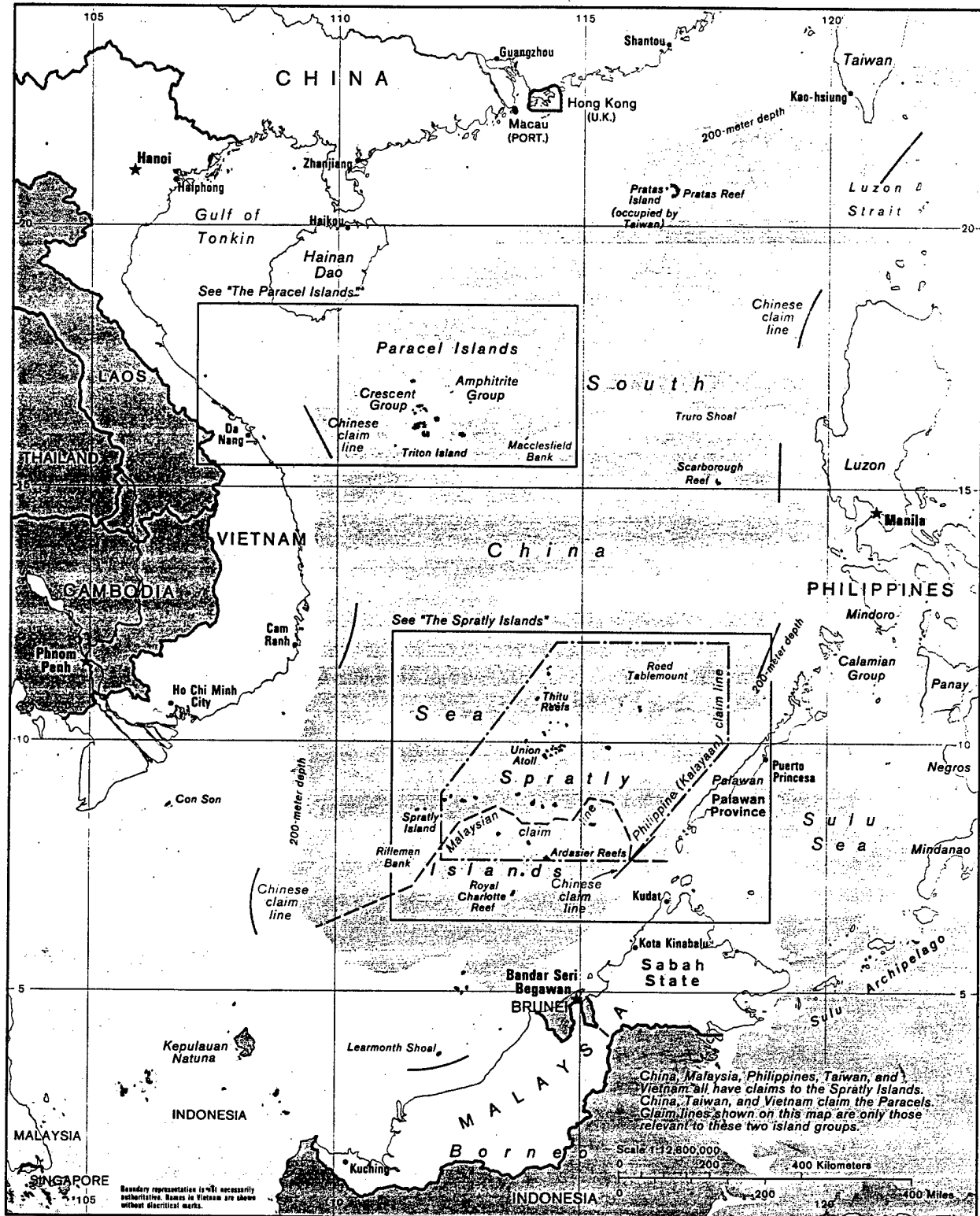


FIGURE (3)  
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

VERTICAL FILE 4/89



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10/22/89

This map illustrates the coastal regions of China, Taiwan, and the surrounding seas. The provinces of Jiangxi, Fujian, and Guangdong are shown in China, with major cities like Nanchang, Fuzhou, and Taipei marked. The map includes a legend for province boundaries, railroads, and roads, and a scale bar in kilometers and statute miles. The surrounding waters are labeled as the East China Sea, Taiwan Strait, and South China Sea.

**Legend:**

- Province boundary
- Railroad
- Road

**Scale:**

- 0 to 100 Kilometers
- 0 to 100 Statute Miles

**Geographical Features:**

- China:** Jiangxi, Fujian, Guangdong
- Taiwan:** Taipei, Taichung, Tainan, etc.
- Seas:** East China Sea, Taiwan Strait, South China Sea
- Islands:** Peng-hu (Pescadores), etc.

FIGURE (4)

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